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ABSTRACT

The Arts Education Partnership Working Group takes the position that the arts are forms of understanding and ways of knowing that are valuable in and of themselves; that they are fundamentally important to education; that they are important to excellent education and to effective school reform; that the most significant contribution of the arts to education reform is the transformation of teaching and learning; that this transformation is best realized in the context of comprehensive, systematic education reform; and that art educators, artists, and arts organizations must be encouraged strongly to join actively in local, state, and national reform efforts. Four detailed recommendations on arts education and the role of the arts within the larger curriculum are provided. In summary, the recommendations include: the establishment of and funding to sustain a National Center for the Arts in Education; support for the transformation of teacher education in the arts for both pre-service and in-service teachers; support for coordination between the arts curriculum standards setting process and the arts assessment process and inclusion of the arts, within the National Education Goals; and the formation of partnerships that affirm the importance of the arts at local, state, and national levels. (Contains 41 references.) (DB)

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SUMMARY

The Power of the Arts to Transform Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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An Agenda for Action

The Arts and Education Reform

The Arts Education Partnership Working Group
under the sponsorship of
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
and
The J. Paul Getty Trust

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Cover photos (left to right): National Symphony Orchestra Music Director Mstislav Rostropovich teaches a master class, photo by Joan Marcus; young audience member, photo by Carol Pratt; Cleveland Ballet Dancing Wheels, Greater Columbus Arts Council.

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SO-AR

The Power of the Arts to Transform Education

An Agenda for Action

Recommendations from

The Arts Education Partnership Working Group

Chair
James D. Wolfensohn, Chairman
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Vice-Chair
Harold M. Williams, President
The J. Paul Getty Trust

January 1993

We present the recommendations of the Arts Education Partnership Working Group.

These actions will help place the arts on the nation's education agenda. Over the last decade, the belief has deepened that we must educate all our children to new levels of excellence. We speak for all the members of the Arts Education Partnership Working Group in affirming the conviction that the arts are essential to education, in our communities, and our schools.

We are convinced that excellence in education is possible only with the full inclusion of the arts. An education that encompasses and respects the wonderful diversity of peoples and cultures in the nation is possible only when it includes the arts.

The arts define what we mean by civilization. They are part of the foundation and framework of our culture. As a universal language through which we can express our common aspirations, the arts are a channel to understanding and appreciating other cultures. They are a basic and central medium of human communication and understanding. They encourage our children to dream and to create, to have beliefs, and to have a sense of identity within our rich and diverse culture.

The arts are unique ways of knowing and forms of knowledge. They are essential elements in the development of our children.

A society that deprives its students of these studies accepts mediocrity and endangers a democracy that depends on an informed citizenry to sustain it.

The full inclusion of the arts in education means the full use of all the cultural resources and arts organizations at local, state, and national levels. Theaters and dance companies, orchestras, museums and performing arts centers, local arts agencies and state arts councils all bring to education a wealth of knowledge and resources.

Working as partners, arts and cultural organizations and educators and schools complement and strengthen each other while bringing quite different skills and capacities to the larger goal of education reform. Such partnerships already exist in many locations, and they are an important source of reform and renewal for teachers, students, artists, schools, and communities.

By bringing together federal, national, state and local partners and sharing our talents, we bring to the education of our children the knowledge, the beauty and the vitality of the arts, enabling future generations of Americans to explore, to dream, to participate in our nation, and to create its future.

We are optimistic about that future.

These recommendations are an open door; we need only the will and the determination to walk through it. We look forward to working closely with federal, national, state, and local partners to realize and implement them.

James D. Wolfensohn
Chairman
The Kennedy Center

Harold M. Williams
President
The J. Paul Getty Trust

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Students learn creativity in the arts.

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OUR FOCUS: CHILDREN

This report is about children. They are the reason the power of the arts must be understood and used throughout education. Without the arts our children cannot realize their full potential. Unless they realize their possibilities, our communities and our nation are necessarily less than they might be.

In the arts our children experience much that we would like to see in all education: They are active and involved. They have a sense of accomplishment and exhilaration. They work with purpose and energy. They are not "taking subjects," rather they are absorbed in important questions–exploring, discovering, creating, learning.

Children use the arts unselfconsciously, with joy and intensity, with obvious delight in their discoveries and achievements. They have no doubt that the pictures made, the songs sung, the dances danced, and the stories told and enacted are as important as anything else they do.

Unfortunately, children everywhere in America suffer from an absence of the arts. As their school years progress, most children find fewer and fewer opportunities to engage in this compelling way of learning. Consequently, the capacity of these children to think and imagine is diminished. They are less engaged in learning than they might be. And they lose one of the main advantages afforded by the arts: the means out of mediocrity. These are the reasons we are concerned with education reform. It is our children and their potential that cause us to ask for a reexamination of the ways in which the arts can be, and should be, put to work to transform learning and teaching.

PHOTO: PHIL BEDEL

Students develop critical thinking by exploring the arts.

ARTS EDUCATION: WHAT IT IS

By the arts we refer to dance, visual arts, music, theater, two- and three-dimensional fine arts design and architecture, film and video, and the literary arts such as poetry, fiction, and other written forms of creative expression.

To realize the benefits that the arts can bring to education and to utilize them in the larger task of transforming education, there must be substantial agreement on what comprises an education in the arts. As stated by the National Coalition for Education in the Arts, a consortium of 28 national arts organizations, arts education is the process of teaching and learning how to create and produce the visual and performing arts and how to understand and evaluate art forms created by others. With language, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences, the arts constitute a fundamental curriculum.

At a minimum, such a curriculum encompasses four basic aspects with the expectation that students will:

- Create and perform the arts;
- Understand the role and importance of the arts in culture and history;
- Perceive and respond to the qualities of the arts; and
- Make sound judgments about the arts and understand the bases upon which those judgments rest.

A successful arts education program engages students intellectually, emotionally, and physically with the arts as one of the essential elements of life for the individual, the community, and the nation.

Teachers solve problems in the visual arts.

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ARTS EDUCATION: WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

The arts must be viewed as important for both their intrinsic and their associated educational value. Both dimensions can contribute significantly to education reform.

Forms of Knowledge, Ways of Knowing

The arts are valuable in and of themselves. They are a source of human insight and understanding about the world and ourselves. They connect us to the past and help us imagine new possibilities for the future. As Charles Fowler has written in *The Washington Post*:

> The arts are forms of thought every bit as potent in what they convey as mathematical and scientific symbols. They are ways we human beings "talk" to each other. They are the languages of civilization through which we express our fears, our anxieties, our curiosities, our hungers, our discoveries, our hopes. The arts are modes of communication that give us access to the stored wisdom of the ages. . . . Science and technology do not tell us what it means to be human. The arts do.

The arts represent multiple forms of intelligence and multiple ways of knowing the world that are not duplicated by other means. In his book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Basic Books, 1983), Howard Gardner has identified seven different forms of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical/mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and the personal intelligences that permit us to understand ourselves and others. American schooling generally emphasizes only two of these–linguistic and logical/mathematical–ignoring the other potentials of the mind. Gardner says (p. 356):

> Among those observers partial to spatial, bodily, or musical forms of knowing, as well as those who favor a focus on the interpersonal aspects of living, an inclination to indict contemporary schooling is understandable. The modern secular school has simply–though it need not have–neglected these aspects of intellectual competence.

Arts education provides a new approach. While creative writing explores and develops linguistic potential, music education nurtures musical intelligence, visual arts and design develop spatial intelligence, dance draws upon kinesthetic or movement intelligence, and theater exercises the personal intelligences. The arts therefore help schools address the total mind and cultivate the full range of human potential.

As ways of knowing, the arts involve us in complex uses of our intelligence. Other developed countries with which we compete do not miss the opportunity to ensure that their children have opportunities to cultivate their utmost mental and emotional capacities. They seem to understand something we have lost sight of: To know neither the rich storehouse of human experience contained in the arts nor the use of the expressive and communicative functions of the arts is to be educationally deprived. The rewarding and challenging activities of arts education are part of every child's education.

Multiple Benefits

Experienced observers tell us, and data increasingly support claims, that schools with strong arts programs regularly incur such benefits as:

- Intensified student motivation to learn;
- Better attendance among students and teachers;
- Increased graduation rates;
- Improved multicultural understanding;
- Renewed and invigorated faculty;
- More highly engaged students (which traditional approaches fail to inspire);
- Development of a higher order of thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving ability; and
- Greater community participation and support.

The arts contribute to an overall culture of excellence in a school. They are an effective means of connecting children to each other and helping them gain an understanding of the creators who preceded them. They provide schools with a ready way to formulate relationships across and among traditional disciplines and to connect ideas and notice patterns. Works of art provide effective means for linking information in history and social studies, mathematics, science, and geography. A work of art can lead to many related areas of learning, opening lines of inquiry, revealing that art, like life, is lived in a complex world not easily defined in discrete subjects.

While the arts alone do not deliver all these benefits, they can be, and often are, a critical factor in their occurrence. As the arts transform teaching and learning, they engage students in ways that make these benefits much more likely to be realized.

Based on these findings, the position of the Working Group is that:

- **The arts are forms of understanding and ways of knowing that are fundamentally important to education;**
- **The arts are important to excellent education and to effective school reform;**
- **The most significant contribution of the arts to education reform is the transformation of teaching and learning;**
- **This transformation is best realized in the context of comprehensive, systemic education reform; and**
- **Art educators, artists, and arts organizations must be strongly encouraged to actively join in local, state, and national reform efforts.**

THE POWER OF THE ARTS TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION

As ways of knowing and as wells of human understanding, the arts can make unique contributions to the transformation of learning and teaching. They can transform the school itself, and they can create more productive partnerships between the school and community. They are a rich source of insight about the world and humanity now and in the past, as well as necessary vehicles for imagining and creating new possibilities tomorrow.

The ever-changing composition of American society makes the arts singly the most powerful tool to bridge cultural differences and bring humanity, compassion, understanding, and harmony to this nation. They are essential to an education that both respects and honors diversity.

These, along with qualities already specified, account for why the arts can serve as powerful agents for education reform. If the purpose of reform is to more successfully and more fully ignite the spirit and imagination of each child and to engage all students more intensely and conscientiously in their education, the arts should be called upon to perform a central role. To engage in education reform without the arts is to take on one of the most daunting challenges our nation faces without relying upon one of education's most potentially powerful assets.

PHOTO: JOAN MARCUS

Hearing impaired children learn about music through vibrations.

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The arts are untapped resources for education reform that can transform education in four vitally important areas:

Briefly,

For the **Learners and Learning**, the arts:

- Are unique ways of knowing and forms of knowledge;
- Engage multiple ways of knowing;
- Invite both active learning and reflection;
- Affirm diversity of learning;
- Are intrinsically rewarding, leading to motivated individuals;

For the **School, the Teacher, and Teaching**, the arts:

- Create an overall climate of excellence;
- Provide unique ways of knowing and forms of knowledge;
- Bring new dimensions to professional life;
- Connect insights and understanding across areas of knowledge;
- Connect teaching/learning and assessment, changing methods and providing new resources and insights;

For the **Community and School**, the arts:

- Build strong partnerships between community and schools;
- Contribute to the creative life of the whole community;
- Build unity and shared experience in diversity;
- Use the community and the school as creative resources for each other;

For the **Nation**, the arts:

- Help create and give form to our sense of identity;
- Encourage independent thought and judgment essential in a democracy;
- Celebrate diversity while building unity.

At Work in the World

Education reform is driven in part by the need to succeed in a global market. In recent reports from the Department of Labor, the Secretary's Commission on Necessary Skills (SCANS) has identified the skills needed to work successfully in the future. A solid education in the arts develops many of the qualities required to do this. Thinking creatively and analytically, solving problems, and envisioning, for example, are strongly supported in the process of making and thinking in the arts. Art work often depends upon the successful mastery of sophisticated technologies. The performing arts especially can involve complex teamwork, allocation of scarce resources, and direct experience in leading and negotiating. In short, the arts contribute to the nation's need for creative, skillful workers and for innovative leaders. Surely these are among the most important aims of educational reform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform education, the Working Group makes the following specific recommendations for Congress and the Administration. We urge collaboration among national, state, and local agencies and organizations to implement them.

I. A NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE ARTS IN EDUCATION

In considering the establishment of a national center, the Working Group acknowledges the many valuable programs across the nation. Still, it concludes that only a national center will enable the arts to contribute to education reform by providing a critical missing service to educators, artists and arts professionals, policymakers, and others by establishing and coordinating national resource exchanges and dissemination; that only a national center will develop and sustain a perspective inclusive of all the art forms and of a variety of approaches and strategies; that only a national center will serve as a means for the coordination of information and programs linking ongoing work in standards-setting, research, assessment, and other national developments; that only a national center will provide national visibility and signal a national commitment to the arts as fundamentally important to education.

The foundation for a national center is an information network that connects research, effective programs, and vital information with the people and communities who will use them.

A national center would support and enhance the work of local communities by enabling them to learn from each other and to base their own efforts on the best available information.

We recommend the establishment and funding to sustain a National Center for the Arts in Education.

The Center would perform the following functions:

- Serve as the coordinating unit in a proactive national system for the gathering and dissemination of information resources on the arts in education;
- Facilitate coordination of national initiatives in support of the goal of making the arts a fundamental part of the general education of all students;
- Organize forums for discussion, analysis, and clarification of policies and issues important to understanding the contributions of the arts to excellence in education and the consideration of alternative approaches and actions;
- In cooperation with the national arts education research agenda, coordinate national dissemination of research, facilitate its application, and identify and respond to gaps in these areas.
- Identify and recognize excellence and achievement by teachers, programs, schools, communities, and partnerships.

II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education and preparation in the arts, both for new teachers and those who are already teaching, are critical to the achievement of the transformation of teaching and learning. We believe that teachers must work in partnership with colleagues and with the arts and education community outside the schools in order to transform successfully the role of the arts in education. This will require significant changes in the education, certification, and reeducation of teachers, including classroom teachers, specialists, and artists as educators. The key issues and recommendations in this report reside in the firm belief that reform of teacher education in the arts is critical to the success of national education reform.

We recommend support for the transformation of teacher education in the arts for both pre-service and in-service.

We urge the creation and funding of a program for arts education comparable to the Eisenhower Program for Math & Science Education. The effort should:

- Initiate and fund pilot teacher-preparation programs that demonstrate what arts specialists and classroom teachers, individually and cooperatively, should know, be able to do, and value in the arts in order to reach K-12 students;
- Identify and support model programs that demonstrate how pre-service arts education can be integrated with standards for teacher preparation;
- Encourage and support the development and strengthening of partnerships between the arts and education communities; and
- Encourage and support the involvement of artists, other arts professionals, and arts organizations in arts education.

III. STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

The transformation we envision creates new expectations for teaching and learning. Curriculum standards and student assessments make important contributions to meeting these expectations. Under the leadership of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts, standards for learning in the arts are now being established for the first time. Simultaneously, an effort to build consensus for a new assessment of the arts through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is underway. The standards-setting process and the process of developing outcomes to be assessed are similar. Both need to identify what children should know and be able to do in the arts. Both need to be comprehensive in addressing a broad range of knowledge and skills in the arts. It is essential that there be close coordination as these two independent processes move forward.

The national voluntary curriculum standards need to be embraced and accepted by state departments of education and local education agencies as they develop or revise their curriculum frameworks and assessments in the arts to ensure that the standards have impact on the teaching and learning of the arts in the classroom, on teacher education, and/or on teacher certification. Whether the national standards and the arts assessment instruments are accepted as models to guide state and local education agencies will depend to a great extent upon an informed understanding of them.

We recommend that the Congress, the Department of Education, and other appropriate federal and state agencies:

- **Support coordination between the arts curriculum standards-setting process and the arts assessment process;**
- **Support implementation of periodic national arts assessments;**
- **Support implementation by states and localities; and**
- **Seek inclusion of the arts in the National Educational Goals.**

IV. PARTNERSHIPS

We strongly believe that the power of the arts to transform education can succeed only with effective partnerships and collaborations. These must be built at local, state, and national levels. Successful education reform, especially efforts that incorporate the arts, depends upon informed community support. Partnerships bringing schools and educators together with arts and cultural organizations are an important element in building and sustaining community support. The most important partnerships are community based, for it is in the local community where support must be built to sustain reform. We believe that local partnerships, involving educators, arts organizations, parents, local decisionmakers, and all the members of a community, should be affirmed and supported.

We recommend that appropriate national programs be established to support and encourage all communities involved in education reform to:

- **Include the arts in their goals;**
- **Involve arts educators and arts and cultural organizations in the planning and implementation; and**
- **Institute a program to identify, recognize, and disseminate information about community-school partnerships that use the arts for achieving excellence and for advancing education reform.**

These programs may be implemented most effectively through the National Center for Arts in Education.

We recommend that arts educators, including artists and arts organizations and agencies, commit themselves and their institutions to full and active participation in local, state, and national education reform efforts.

With our children in mind, in all their wonderful diversity and individual uniqueness, we urge the implementation of these recommendations.

IN CONCLUSION

American children must be fully nurtured, affirmed, and enabled by the educational opportunities we provide. The arts are an indispensable resource for assuring these advantages and improving the opportunities that now exist. If our children are to prosper mentally and emotionally to their maximum, education reform must incorporate the arts and exploit their capacity to transform learning and teaching.

We conclude that the best strategy for making the arts essential to a basic education is for educators and artists, as well as schools and arts and cultural organizations, to work collaboratively towards comprehensive education reform.

For the benefits of the arts to be realized in current educational reform efforts, the leadership of the Administration and Congress are imperative. The Working Group recognizes the arts as a potent ally in the challenging process of transforming American education and American schools. These recommendations could help the rich resources of the arts to be used to enormous educational advantage. Our children, our nation, and our future will be the beneficiaries.

BACKGROUND

In response to concerns from the education and arts communities about the absence of the arts from the National Educational Goals and to ensure their inclusion in subsequent education reform efforts, a number of actions and initiatives were taken to put the arts on the national education agenda. These included:

- Developing world-class standards in the arts;
- Implementing high national standards;
- Including communities involved in education reform;
- Including the arts in the National Assessment of Educational Progress;
- Creating a National Center for Arts Education;
- Developing a research agenda in arts education; and
- Designing a National Arts Education Dissemination Network.

James D. Wolfensohn, chairman of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, convened a task force of private citizens to consider these initiatives and recommend actions. Wolfensohn asked Harold M. Williams, president of the J. Paul Getty Trust, to serve as vice-chair and to support the effort. Together they formed the Arts Education Partnership Working Group.

Membership on the Working Group includes classroom teachers, principals, and superintendents; and representatives of theaters, dance companies, orchestras, museums, art centers, state and local arts organizations, foundations, and other national organizations in the arts and in education.

The Working Group met for the first time on June 22, 1992, at the Kennedy Center. It considered the current initiatives outlined and identified others important to bringing the full benefit of the arts into the nation's quest for educational excellence for all its children. In order to facilitate these efforts, the Working Group divided into the following six subcommittees:

- National Center Including Dissemination and Research
- Professional Development/Teacher Education
- Standards and Assessment
- Arts and Education Reform
- Advocacy and Partnership
- Other Strategies

The subcommittees worked over the summer of 1992 to prepare recommendations for the full Working Group, which met again in Los Angeles on October 18 and 19, hosted by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts.

As deliberations went on, the Working Group focused on the strong relationship between inclusion of the arts and overall education excellence. This is a summary of the work and the recommendations for action.

The Arts Education Partnership Working Group
Washington, D.C.
January 1993

Members and Acknowledgments

Above (left to right): Teacher workshop participant at the Kennedy Center, photo by Joan Marcus; young audience member in Alaska, photo by Joan Marcus; students discuss sculpture, photo by Bob Ware.

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